Numb. 80

The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

From *Tueſday October* 11. to *Thurſday October* 13. 1709.

Grecian Coffee-houſe, October 12.

THIS learned Board has complain'd to me of the exorbitant Price of late Years put upon Books, and conſequently on Learning, which has rais'd the Reward demanded by learned Men for their Advice and Labour. In order to regulate and fix a Standard in theſe Matters; Divines, Phyſicians, and Lawyers, have ſent in large Propoſals, which are of great Light and Inſtruction. From the Peruſal of theſe Memorials, I am come to this immediate Reſolution, till I have Leiſure to treat the Matter at large; *viz.* In Divinity, Fathers ſhall be valu'd according to their Antiquity; Schoolmen by the Pound Weight; and Sermons by their Goodneſs. In my own Profeſſion, which is moſtly Phyſick, Authors ſhall be rated according to their Language. The *Greek* is ſo rarely underſtood, and the *Engliſh* ſo well, I judge them of no Value, ſo that only *Latin* ſhall bear a Price, and that too according to its Purity, and as it ſerves beſt for Preſcription. In Law, the Value muſt be ſet according to the Intricacy and Obſcurity of the Author, and Blackneſs of the Letter; provided always, that the Binding be of Calve's-Skin. This Method I ſhall ſettle alſo with Relation to all other Writings; inſomuch that even theſe our Lucubrations, tho' hereafter printed by *Aldus*, *Elzivir*, or *Stephanus*, ſhall not advance above one ſingle Penny.

White's Chocolate-Houſe, October 12.

It will be allow'd me, that I have all along ſhow'd great Reſpect in Matters which concern the Fair Sex; but the Inhumanity with which the Author of the following Letter has been uſed, is not to be ſuffer'd.

SIR, *Octob.* 9.

'YEſterday I had the Misfortune to drop in at my Lady *Haughty's* upon her Viſiting-Day. 'When I enter'd the Room where ſhe receives Com-'pany, they all ſtood up indeed; but they ſtood as 'if they were to ſtare at, rather than to receive 'me. After a long Pauſe, a Servant brought a round 'Stool, on which I ſat down at the lower End of 'the Room, in the Preſence of no leſs than 'Twelve Perſons, Gentlemen and Ladies, lolling 'in Elbow-Chairs. And to compleat my Diſgrace, 'my Miſtreſs was of the Society. I try'd to com-'poſe my ſelf in vain, not knowing how to diſ-'poſe of either my Legs or Arms, nor how to 'ſhape my Countenance; the Eyes of the whole 'Room being ſtill upon me in a profound Silence. 'My Confuſion at laſt was ſo great, that without 'ſpeaking, or being ſpoken to, I fled for it, and 'left the Aſſembly to treat me at their Diſcretion. 'A Lecture from you upon theſe inhuman Di-'ſtinctions in a free Nation, will, I doubt not, pre-'vent the like Evils for the future, and make it, as 'we ſay, As cheap Sitting as Standing. I am with 'the greateſt Reſpect,

SIR,

Your moſt Humble

And

Moſt Obedient Servant,

J. R.

'*P. S.* I had almoſt forgot to inform you, That a 'fair young Lady ſat in an armleſs Chair upon 'my Right Hand with manifeſt Diſcontent in her 'Looks.

Soon after the Receipt of this Epiſtle, I heard a very gentle Knock at my Door: My Maid went down, and brought up Word, That a tall, lean, black Man, well dreſs'd, who ſaid he had not the Honour to be acquainted with me, deſired to be admitted. I bid her ſhow him up, met him at my Chamber-Door, and then fell back a few Paces. He approach'd me with great Reſpect, and told me with a low Voice, He was the Gentleman that had been ſeated upon the round Stool. I immediately recollected, that there was a Joint-Stool in my Chamber, which I was afraid he might take for an Inſtrument of Diſtinction, and therefore wink'd at my Boy to carry it into my Cloſet. I then took him by the Hand, and led him to the upper End of my Room, where I plac'd him in my great Elbow-Chair; at the ſame Time drawing another without Arms to it, for my ſelf to ſit by him. I then ask'd him, At what Time this Misfortune befel him? He anſwer'd, Between the Hours of Seven and Eight in the Evening. I then ask'd him, What he had eat or drank that Day? He reply'd, Nothing but a Diſh of Water-gruel, with a few Plumbs in it. In the next Place I felt his Pulſe, which was very low and languiſhing. Theſe Circumſtances confirm'd me in an Opinion which I had entertain'd upon the firſt reading of his Letter, that the Gentleman was far gone in the Spleen. I therefore adviſ'd him to riſe the next Morning and plunge into the Cold Bath, there to remain under Water 'till he was almoſt drowned. This I order'd him to repeat Six Days ſucceſſively; and on the Seventh, to repair at the wonted Hour to my Lady *Haughty's*, and to acquaint me afterwards with what he ſhall meet with there; and particularly to tell me, whether he ſhall think they

they ſtared upon him ſo much as the Time before. The Gentleman ſmil'd; and by his Way of talking to me, ſhew'd himſelf a Man of excellent Senſe in all Particulars, unleſs when a Cane-Chair, a round or a Joint-Stool, were ſpoken of. He open'd his Heart to me at the ſame Time concerning ſeveral other Grievances; as, being overlook'd in publick Aſſemblies, having his Bows unanſwer'd, being help'd laſt at Tables, and plac'd at the back Part of a Coach; with many other Diſtreſſes, which have wither'd his Countenance, and worn him to a Skeleton. Finding him a Man of Reaſon, I enter'd into the Bottom of his Diſtemper. Sir, (ſaid I) there are more of your Conſtitution in this Iſland of *Great-Britain*, than in any other Part of the World; and I beg the Favour of you to tell me, whether you do not obſerve, That you meet with moſt Affronts in rainy Days. He anſwer'd candidly, That he had long obſerv'd, that People were leſs ſawcy in Sun-ſhine than in cloudy Weather. Upon which I told him plainly, his Diſtemper was the Spleen; and that tho' the World was very ill-natur'd, it was not ſo bad as he believ'd it. I further aſſur'd him, That his Uſe of the Cold Bath, with a Courſe of Steel which I ſhould preſcribe him, would certainly cure moſt of his Acquaintance of their Rudeneſs, ill Behaviour, and Impertinence. My Patient ſmil'd, and promis'd to obſerve my Preſcriptions, not forgetting to give me an Account of their Operation. This Diſtemper being pretty epidemical, I ſhall, for the Benefit of Mankind, give the Publick an Account of the Progreſs I make in the Cure of it.

From my own Apartment, October 12.

The Author of the following Letter behaves himſelf ſo ingenuouſly, that I cannot longer defer anſwering him.

Honour'd Sir, *Octob.* 6.

'I Have lately contracted a very honeſt and undiſſembled Claudication in my Left Foot, which will be a double Affliction to me, if (according to your *Tatler* of this Day) it muſt paſs upon the World for a Piece of Singularity and Affectation. I muſt therefore humbly beg Leave to limp along the Streets after my own Way, or I ſhall be inevitably ruin'd in Coach-hire. As ſoon as I am tolerably recover'd, I promiſe to walk as upright as a Ghoſt in a Tragedy, being not of a Stature to ſpare an Inch of Height that I can any Way pretend to. I honour your Lucubrations, and am, with the moſt profound Submiſſion,

Honour'd Sir,

Your moſt Dutiful,

And

Moſt Obedient Servant, &c.

Not doubting but the Caſe is as the Gentleman repreſents, I do hereby order Mr. *Morphew* to deliver him out a Licence, upon paying his Fees, which ſhall empower him to wear a Cane till the 13th of *March* next; Five Months being the moſt I can allow for a Sprain.

St. James's Coffee-houſe, October 12.

We receiv'd this Morning a Mail from *Holland*, which brings Advice, That the Siege of *Mons* is carried on with ſo great Vigor and Bravery, that we hope very ſuddenly to be Maſters of the Place. All Things neceſſary being prepar'd for making the Aſſault on the Hornwork and Ravelin of the Attack of *Bertamont*, the Charge was made this Evening, and began with the Fire of Bombs and Grenades, which was ſo hot, that the Enemy quitted their Poſt, and we lodg'd our ſelves on thoſe Works without Oppoſition. During this Storm, one of our Bombs fell into a Magazine of the Enemy, and blew it up. There are Advices which ſay, the Court of *France* had made new Offers of Peace to the Confederates; but this Intelligence wants Confirmation.

Advertiſements.

This Day is publiſhed,

*** The Monthly Amuſement. Numb. IV. for July, 1709. Containing, Le Malade Imaginare: The Hypocondriac. A Comedy. From the French of Monſieur de Moliere. Written and acted in the Year 1703. Printed for D. Midwinter in St. Paul's Church-yard, and B. Lintott in Fleet-ſtreet; and ſold by J. Morphew near Stationers-Hall. Pr. 1 s. Where may be had the Three firſt.

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*** A Military Dictionary: Explaining all difficult Terms in Martial Diſcipline, Fortification, and Gunnery. The Third Edition, Improv'd. To which is likewiſe added, a Sea Dictionary of all the Terms of Navigation. Both of them very uſeful (to all Perſons that read the Publick News, or ſerve in the Army, Navy, or Militia) for the Underſtanding the Accounts of Sieges, Battles, and other Warlike and Marine Expeditions, which daily occurr in this Time of Action. By Officers who ſerv'd ſeveral Years in Sea and Land. Printed; and ſold by J. Morphew near Stationers-Hall. Price 1. s. 6 d.

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